

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 31-38 are now pending in the application, with Claims 31, 33, 35 and 37 being independent. Claims 17-20 and 27-30 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 31-38 have been added herein.

Claims 17-20 and 27-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, the Examiner suggested that at the time of filing, Applicant did not have possession of the claimed feature of excluding a vessel utilizing a substance other than pure water between the UV exposure means and the washing vessel. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, Applicant has cancelled these claims. The newly-presented claims are directed to processes and are not directed to locations of vessels or a lack thereof. Support for the current claims can be found throughout the specification. For example, at the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 24, it is described that the irradiation with ultraviolet rays is performed “immediately before the wet-cleaning with pure water of the substrate.” The described and depicted embodiments also support these features. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112, first paragraph, rejection are requested.

Claims 17-20 and 27-30 were rejected under obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,651,680. Because the rejected claims have been cancelled, this rejection is deemed moot. Moreover, the claims of US '680 recite features that are not recited in the current process claims and such claims are believed to be patentably distinct from one another. Nevertheless, Applicant has prepared a Terminal Disclaimer, and, in order to expedite allowance, will submit such if the double patenting rejection is maintained and is the sole rejection remaining in the application.

Claims 17-20 and 27-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 63-271938 (Shindo) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,071,488 (Takayama et al.). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Shindo relates to cleaning of hard surfaces and describes irradiating the surfaces with ultraviolet light before cleaning. By so doing, organic foreign substances such as a photo resist and the like remaining on the surface to be cleaned are subjected to chemical change and decompose so as to easily dissolve or peel with the cleaning fluid. As noted previously, Shindo describes using pure water in conjunction with other cleaners or using hydrogen peroxide only, isopropyl alcohol only, or hydrogen peroxide and isopropyl alcohol. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Shindo as using water as the sole aqueous washing medium, as is recited in each of the independent claims.

The Examiner suggests that the cancelled claims were directed to apparatuses, not methods “and that the structure of the apparatus disclosed by the JP document is fully capable of performing the claimed functions.” The Examiner also suggested that “a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art.” It is respectfully submitted that the prior claims were not reciting any “intended use,” but rather explicit features of the invention. Nevertheless, the current claims are directed to processes, not apparatuses. These claims also explicitly recite specific processes, not “intended uses.” Shindo is not believed to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in those claims.

Takayama et al. was cited for teaching the use of cassettes in liquid treatment, but is not believed to disclose or suggest those features noted above as being deficient in Shindo.

Thus, independent Claims 31, 33, 35 and 37 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection are respectfully requested.

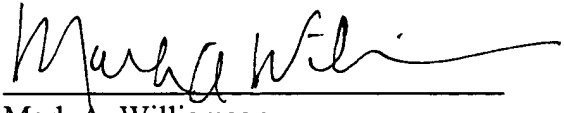
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 31, 33, 35 and 37. Dependent Claims 32, 34, 36 and 38 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Williamson', is written over a horizontal line.

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